

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers March 18, 2006

Michigan News

Common Sense Solutions to Intersection Safety Problems

The majority of serious injuries and deaths in Michigan occur on local roads. All road owners need to take intersection safety seriously. This workshop is intended to provide local government elected officials, safety advocacy groups and employees with a basic understanding of intersection safety problems, issues and liability, and the role they play in making local intersections safer and protecting their agency from litigation. This class is intended for the Non-Engineers. Two upcoming classes take place on April 25, 2006 in St. Ignace and April 26, 2006 in Traverse City. Scholarships are available. For more information please contact Michigan Technological University/Local Technical Assistance Program at 906-487-2102. For more information--- <http://www.michiganltap.org/workshop/index.html>

NETS Feature

Promoting On The Job Health and Safety: NAOSH Week

April 30 – May 6, 2006 is North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week. Sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), NAOSH week promotes workplace safety throughout the year. More... http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/NAOSH_031506feat.asp

Latest Traffic Safety News

Tire Manufacturers To Auto Dealers: Replace Aging Tires

Michelin USA and Continental Tire North America Inc. have become the latest tire manufacturers to issue technical bulletins calling on automobile dealers to replace all tires 10 years or older. Industry and safety experts claim that tires degrade over time and can become dangerous even if they look new. However, some tire and safety experts say there is no concrete evidence showing that tires aren't safe after a certain age. Read the full at...

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060223/AUTO01/%20602230368/1148/AUTO01>

1

AAA Offers Tool Addressing Older Driver Safety

By 2020, there will be more than 40 million licensed drivers age 65 and older, according to AAA. This age group has the second-highest crash death rate per mile, followed by teenagers. They are at the highest risk for intersection crashes and are more likely to injure themselves than others in a crash. To help older drivers and their family members, AAA has developed "Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer," a computer-based screening tool that enables older drivers to test their cognitive, physical and visual abilities in the privacy of their own homes. For more information visit www.aaa.com/publicaffairs.

New Electronic System To Improve Large Truck, Bus Braking Systems

A new radio frequency inspection (RFID) system currently under development could help solve the brake problems on large trucks and buses. According to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, brake problems account for about half of all safety defects resulting in heavy vehicles being pulled out

of service. The system uses electronic sensors mounted at key locations on each truck or bus. The driver uses a hand-held device to check-in and make sure that there aren't any maintenance concerns. For more information visit http://zonarsystems.com/pdf/Zonar_Spectra_Release.pdf.

Houston To Launch Parking Meters That Can Be Paid Via Cell Phone

Houston is preparing to debut tech-savvy parking meters allowing drivers to pay using credit cards, dollar bills, and even cell phones. The new meters will replace 2,300 downtown metered spaces and are scheduled to appear in early summer. The overhaul would make Houston the first city nationwide to manage parking meters on a wireless network. To pay by cell phone, customers can call an automated service, send a text message or visit a web site using a cell phone. Read the full article at <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/3702984.html>

Drowsy Driving May Be Responsible For Deadly Crash In DC

A deadly crash on a major highway leading into Washington, DC is being blamed on drowsy driving. A section of the Washington Beltway was closed almost all day after a truck on an overpass swerved, rolled over and spilled its load of pre-fabricated fencing onto the roadway below, hitting and killing a driver commuting to work. The truck driver's logbook showed that the driver had been driving for 16 hours without rest. Federal regulations require that drivers rest after 11 hours of driving. Read the full article at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/03/AR2006030301710.html>

Study Suggests Sleep May Impact Injury Risk

Researchers at the University of Iowa recently conducted a study to assess the association between the amount of sleep a person gets and his or her risk of injury. The researchers found that sleeping for less than 7.5 hours nightly increased a person's risk of injury by 61%, compared with sleeping 7.5 to 8.5 hours nightly. For more information visit http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=16490649&query_hl=1&itool=pubmed_docsum

Facing Labor Shortage Trucking Industry Adds New Benefits

The trucking industry is facing one of the worst labor shortages in its history as a result of retirements, according to a recent report in the New York Times. The American Trucking Associations said the current shortage of 20,000 drivers will grow to 100,000 within a decade. To draw drivers, trucking companies are now offering 401(k), stock options, and health care packages. They are also offering cash bonuses and prizes to drivers for viable referrals. Plus, companies are upgrading vehicles with the latest technology for satellite radio and television. Some are now even allowing drivers to bring pets and spouses on the road.

More States Debate 'Black Box' Technology

Three more states are considering legislation to control access to cars' black box data amid opposition by law enforcement and insurance companies, who argue the information is critical during crash investigations. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia state legislators are currently debating who can have access to the information. Last year, North Dakota placed some limits on insurance companies making your car testify against you. Meanwhile, NHTSA is expected to issue a new rule later this year requiring automakers to standardize black-box technology so data is recorded and stored the same way for researchers to compare. For more information visit http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2006/02/black_boxes_states.html

The Latest In Infotainment: Blue & Me

Fiat Auto Group and Microsoft Corp. will unveil the newest in infotainment systems, Blue & Me™, at the 2006 Geneva International Motor Show. Beginning in March, the new system will allow motorists access to their personal mobile devices. The Windows Mobile® for automotive-based infotainment package comes with Bluetooth® and USB connectivity, which allows drivers to listen to music from their personal integrated media player. It also features a hands-free phone kit that can be controlled completely by voice control. For more information visit <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/press/2006/feb06/02-28FiatMSGenShowPR.mspx>

Telematics On The Rise

Recent research by Venture Development Corporation (VDC) has found that telematics and communication devices will continue to grow explosively through 2007 and beyond. Telematics devices, or location-based communication and information applications (i.e., enhanced security, safety, navigation and convenience to the mobile user) are expanding at a compound annual growth rate of 13.7% and will reach over \$1.2 billion by 2007. For more information visit <http://www.vdc-corp.com/other/press/06/pr06-13.html>

Digital Signs Provide Critical Link To Information For Mobile Employees

Digital signage technology is helping drivers, mechanics and other employees access critical information that normally is only accessible via traditional communication methods—including email and paper. These large-screen plasma and LCD displays provide a wide variety of instantly updatable, customizable messages. The signs are becoming a key part of the communication system at Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), which operates the public transit system and airports in the Buffalo/Niagara Falls region of New York. Employees can now receive important route changes, safety alerts and employee news. Read the full article at http://www.metro-magazine.com/t_featpick.cfm?id=90509532

Technology Makes Car Lock Outs Even More Frustrating

Getting locked out of your car is a frustrating experience. And now that most new cars contain electronic chips it has become even more frustrating. With these electronic chips, the car itself has to be programmed to accept new keys. In addition, carmakers are increasingly limiting locksmiths' access to the information needed to program vehicles and make new keys, forcing drivers to the dealership resulting in higher costs. Carmakers argue that making key information more available would diminish the effectiveness of their anti-theft systems. Now several states are stepping in to make it easier to get replacement car keys. A bill introduced in Maryland would require vehicle makers licensed in the state to set up a system that would give auto owners and lessees 24-hour, seven-day-a-week access to information sufficient to make a key reproduction. Similar legislation is pending in Virginia and was recently introduced in California. Read the full article at <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06068/667766.stm>

Automaker Update Bells And Whistles For Non-Belt Users

Automakers are now installing systems to bug those who do not use their seat belts. And these systems go beyond the traditional chimes and lights that are required when you start the car and can continue intermittently for as long as nine minutes. Safety advocates say the systems can save lives. A study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that the Ford system increased belt use to 76% from 71%. Read the full article at http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2006-03-02-seatbelt-usat_x.htm

Work/Life:

Safety Advocates Lobby For Child Safety Legislation

Child safety advocates are lobbying for legislation that would require automakers to install safety devices aimed at protecting children. The proposed legislation would install systems to improve visibility behind vehicles and design power windows that automatically reverse when they hit an obstruction. It is estimated that non-crash vehicle accidents killed 213 children last year, with at least 1,000 deaths since 1999. Read the full article at <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060310/BUSINESS01/%20603100352/1014>

Simulator To Test Older Driver Safety

A commercial driving simulator that could help screen older drivers received the green light. The simulator tests people on such driving skills as whether they can safely turn, brake for an unexpected pedestrian, accelerate properly into a different lane, navigate city, suburban and rural driving and focus during distractions. Read the full article at <http://home.hamptonroads.com/stories/story.cfm?story=100750&ran=102301>

New Center Addresses Teen Driver Safety

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center has established the Center for the Study of Young Drivers (CSYD) to study and improve the safety of young drivers. The center will focus on developing a fundamental understanding of high crash rate attributed to young drivers and reduce teen driver motor vehicle crashes. In addition, the Center's scientists will work with policy-makers and the general public to raise awareness about the complexities that lead to young driver crashes. For more information visit <http://www.hsrb.unc.edu/directions/2006/winter/csyd.htm>

Work-Life:

NHTSA: States With Primary Enforcement Laws Have Lower Fatality Rates

The National Highway Traffic Safety (NHTSA) released a Traffic Safety Facts Research Note examining the percentage of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities and fatality rates between states that have primary seat belt use laws and states that did not for the years 2000–2004. NHTSA concluded that states with primary enforcement laws had lower fatality rates. View the Note at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2006/810557.pdf>

FMCSA Announces First Medical Review Board

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association (FMCSA) has announced its first-ever medical review board. The board will provide science-based direction to FMCSA as it updates its policies for commercial motor vehicles. The purpose of the Board is to help FMCSA establish safer standards for drivers based on knowledge related to sleep deprivation, performance and shift work. For more information visit <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/news/news-releases/2006/030706.htm>

International Traffic Safety News:

China Launches Seat Belt Initiative

Recognizing the potential that seat belts have in reducing deaths and injuries on roads, the Chinese government has launched the Seat Belt Intervention Project. 'China accounts for approximately 15 percent of the world's total number of deaths from traffic crashes every year, and the number has been increasing by 10 percent annually,' according to Chinese officials. For more information visit <http://www.automotive.com/features/90/auto-news/18691/index.html>

In-Car Navigation More Dangerous Than Using A Map Behind The Wheel

road-wise workforce



According to a new UK study, operating in-car satellite navigation systems while driving is causing motorists to lose concentration on the road. Rather than helping motorists, the study suggests that the new technology could be even more distracting than trying to read a map at the wheel. Read the full article at http://www.fleet-central.com/bf/t_inside.cfm?action=news_pick&storyID=22623



Dan Vartanian
NETS Coordinator
Office of Highway Safety Planning
(517) 333-5322
vartanid@michigan.gov
www.michigan.gov/michnets

